

Art-Based Teacher Education Practices: The Case of the Teacher Academies City and Culture Academy

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Mersin Teacher Academies

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the contributions of art-based teacher education practices implemented within the City and Culture Academy of the Mersin Teacher Academies to teachers' professional and personal development. Using a qualitative case study design, the research explored teachers' experiences in caricature and ceramics workshops conducted during the 2025–2026 academic year. The study group consisted of 42 volunteer teachers selected through criterion sampling, including 22 participants in the caricature workshop and 20 in the ceramics workshop. Data were collected through a semi-structured interview form and analyzed using content analysis. Coding reliability was established through independent coding by two researchers, yielding an inter-coder agreement of 91%. The findings indicate that both workshops made substantial contributions to teachers' cognitive, affective, creative, and professional development. Participants emphasized enhanced creativity, critical thinking, aesthetic awareness, self-confidence, patience, motivation, and professional reflection. Hands-on, production-oriented learning activities emerged as the most valuable aspect of the workshops, whereas limited instructional time was identified as the primary challenge. Although teachers reported significant personal transformation, the transfer of acquired artistic competencies into classroom practice remained relatively limited due to curricular and infrastructural constraints. Overall, the findings demonstrate that art-based professional development provides a holistic and transformative learning experience that supports teachers' lifelong learning, well-being, and professional growth. The study recommends extending the duration of such programs and incorporating explicit pedagogical transfer modules to strengthen the integration of artistic learning into classroom teaching.

Keywords: art-based learning, teacher professional development, teacher academies, caricature workshop, ceramics workshop, qualitative research.

INTRODUCTION

The rapidly transforming structure of the information society has substantially altered the functions expected from educational systems. Today, teachers are expected not only to transmit academic knowledge but also to become professionals who are capable of creative thinking, possess critical inquiry skills, develop aesthetic sensitivity, demonstrate strong social-emotional competencies, and embrace the principles of lifelong learning. This situation necessitates the reconsideration of traditional knowledge transmission approaches in teacher education and the development of innovative learning environments that support teachers' multidimensional professional development (Darling-Hammond et al., 2017; OECD, 2023). Recent studies on teacher professional development have demonstrated that effective teacher education should not be limited solely to the transmission of cognitive knowledge. Rather, art-based practices have been reported to make significant contributions to teachers' development of creative thinking, problem-solving abilities, empathy, communication skills, and professional self-efficacy (Leavy, 2020). Within this context, the art-based learning approach has emerged as one of the alternative pedagogical models that has gained increasing importance in teacher education.

Art-based learning is a holistic educational approach that emphasizes individuals' construction of knowledge not only through cognitive processes but also through sensory, aesthetic, emotional, and creative experiences

(Eisner, 2002). This approach considers learning not merely as a process of acquiring knowledge but also as a process of constructing meaning, experiencing, and achieving personal transformation. Learning through the arts enables individuals to develop diverse perspectives, generate alternative ways of thinking, and evaluate complex situations from multiple dimensions (Greene, 2001).

Particularly in teacher education, the integration of the arts supports not only teachers' pedagogical knowledge and instructional competencies but also the development of their professional identities. Through artistic activities, teachers re-experience their own learning processes, gain a deeper understanding of students' learning experiences, and develop new perspectives on educational practices (Winner et al., 2013). Consequently, such experiences contribute significantly to both their personal and professional development.

The theoretical foundations of the art-based learning approach are largely grounded in constructivist learning theory. The constructivist perspective argues that learning occurs through individuals' active participation and that knowledge is constructed through personal experiences (Fosnot, 2013). Likewise, artistic activities provide learning environments that enable individuals to participate actively, engage in authentic experiences, and become directly involved in meaning-making processes.

According to Eisner (2002), arts education supports individuals in coping with uncertainty, developing multiple perspectives, and enhancing creative thinking skills. These competencies constitute some of the fundamental professional qualifications expected of contemporary teachers. In order to manage the complex situations encountered in classrooms effectively, develop creative solutions, and respond to students' diverse learning needs, teachers are required to possess aesthetic awareness and creative thinking skills.

International research has consistently demonstrated that art-based teacher education significantly contributes to the professional development of both pre-service and in-service teachers. In a systematic review conducted by Møller-Skau and Lindstøl (2022), art-based learning practices were found to produce significant positive effects on teachers' cognitive, social, and affective development. The authors particularly emphasized substantial improvements in creativity, collaboration, self-awareness, and professional motivation. Similarly, Hayes, Maguire, and O'Sullivan (2021) reported that teachers participating in art-based professional development programs experienced considerable increases in both professional motivation and perceptions of instructional self-efficacy. Furthermore, it has been suggested that the arts create alternative forms of expression for teachers, thereby reducing professional burnout.

METHOD

Research Design

This study was conducted within the framework of the qualitative research approach to examine the effects of the caricature and ceramics workshops implemented under the City and Culture Academy of the Mersin Teacher Academies on teachers. Qualitative research designs enable researchers to investigate individuals' experiences, perceptions, and meaning-making processes within their natural contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018). In order to reveal in detail the reflections of art-based learning practices on teachers' professional and personal development, the case study design was adopted.

Case studies are defined as research designs that enable the in-depth investigation of a particular phenomenon, program, process, or practice within its real-life context (Yin, 2018). The case examined in this study comprises the art-based learning practices carried out within the City and Culture Academy of the Teacher Academies organized by the Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education. The caricature and ceramics workshops, which constituted the focus of the research, were regarded as experiential learning environments in which teachers actively participated and were examined within the scope of a holistic single-case study.

Study Group

The study group consisted of teachers who participated in the caricature and ceramics workshops organized under the City and Culture Academy of the Mersin Teacher Academies during the 2025–2026 academic year.

Criterion sampling, one of the purposive sampling methods, was employed to determine the study group. Purposive sampling enables the selection of information-rich participants who can best serve the purpose of the research (Patton, 2015).

The primary criteria established for participation in the study were regular attendance at the relevant workshops, completion of the workshop process, and voluntary agreement to participate in the research.

A total of 42 teachers meeting these criteria were included in the study. Of these participants, 22 attended the caricature workshop, while 20 participated in the ceramics workshop. The participants consisted of teachers from different subject areas working in various school types. This diversity made it possible to evaluate the effects of art-based learning practices across different teacher profiles. In qualitative research, the primary objective is not to obtain a statistically representative sample but rather to acquire an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon under investigation (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Therefore, the size and diversity of the study group were considered sufficient for achieving the purpose of the research. The voluntary participation of teachers contributed to obtaining more sincere and authentic opinions. Furthermore, the absence of any coercion or external influence during participation enhanced the quality of the collected data.

Data Collection Instrument

A semi-structured interview form developed by the researchers was used as the data collection instrument. Semi-structured interviews provide researchers with a predetermined framework while simultaneously allowing participants to express their experiences in depth and in detail (Kvale & Brinkmann, 2015).

During the development of the interview form, national and international studies on art-based learning, teacher professional development, creative learning, experiential learning, and teacher academies were first reviewed. Based on the literature review, a pool of questions capable of revealing teachers' experiences related to art-based learning processes was generated.

The draft interview form was submitted to three academics specializing in educational sciences, teacher education, and qualitative research for expert review. In line with the feedback received, the content validity of the questions was re-evaluated, several items were simplified, and the final version of the interview form was prepared.

The interview form included the following open-ended questions:

1. What are your opinions regarding the contributions of the workshop process? Please explain your views by comparing your expectations before and after the workshop, together with your reasons.
2. Did you observe any changes in yourself at the end of the workshop process? Please explain. Evaluate the changes or developments in your perspectives and behaviors regarding the art of caricature, together with your reasons.
3. What was the element that attracted your interest and attention the most during the workshop process? Please explain the reasons for your answer.
4. Which stage of the workshop process did you enjoy the most? Please explain the reasons for your preference.
5. Was there any stage of the workshop process that you disliked, found challenging, or considered uninteresting? If so, please explain your reasons.

Through these questions, the study aimed to reveal teachers' experiences regarding their cognitive, affective, social, and professional development.

Data Collection Procedure

The data collection process was conducted during the 2025–2026 academic year. Initially, the necessary permissions were obtained from the Mersin Provincial Directorate of National Education, and the participants were informed about the purpose of the study. They were informed that participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained in accordance with ethical principles.

The data were collected after the completion of both the caricature and ceramics workshops. This approach enabled a holistic evaluation of the experiences teachers had gained throughout the entire process. Participants completed the interview forms in written form, and the collected data were subsequently transferred to the analysis stage.

Throughout the data collection process, participants' identities were kept confidential, and all responses were analyzed through coded identifiers. Participants were coded as T1, T2, T3, ..., thereby ensuring confidentiality and anonymity in accordance with ethical research principles.

Data Analysis

The data obtained in the study were analyzed using content analysis. Content analysis is an analytical approach that enables the systematic examination of qualitative data, the classification of meaningful categories, and the development of themes (Yıldırım & Şimşek, 2021).

The analysis process followed these stages:

First, all interview forms were transferred into an electronic environment and read repeatedly by the researchers. Second, the data were examined line by line, and open codes were generated. Third, codes sharing similar meanings were grouped together to establish sub-themes. Fourth, the relationships among these sub-themes were examined, leading to the development of overarching themes. Fifth, frequency values were calculated for each theme and code. Finally, the findings were interpreted and reported in accordance with the research questions.

Throughout the analysis, teachers' statements were supported by direct quotations, thereby enabling readers to gain a clearer understanding of the findings.

Validity and Reliability

Instead of the concepts of validity and reliability commonly used in quantitative research, the criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) were adopted.

To enhance the credibility of the study, expert opinions were obtained during the development of the data collection instrument. In addition, participants' views were supported with direct quotations, and the findings were reported in detail. The data analysis process was conducted systematically, and every stage was documented.

The researchers independently coded the data, and the resulting codes were subsequently compared. To minimize the influence of researcher bias, all interpretations were grounded directly in participants' statements. The coding and theme development processes were repeatedly reviewed by the research team.

To establish coding reliability, two researchers independently coded the qualitative data. Inter-coder agreement was calculated using the reliability formula proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). The analysis yielded an inter-coder agreement rate of 91%.

According to Miles and Huberman (1994), agreement rates of 80% or higher indicate satisfactory reliability. Therefore, the obtained agreement rate of 91% demonstrates that the coding process achieved a high level of reliability.

FINDINGS

Findings Related to the Caricature Workshop

Findings Related to the First Research Question

Table 1. Expectation Fulfilment and Learning Outcomes

Code	f	%	Interpretation
Development, Learning, and Awareness	17	51.5	The workshop made significant contributions to participants' cognitive development, professional growth, and awareness.
Satisfaction, Expectations, and Experience	10	30.3	Overall, the workshop was evaluated as an experience that met participants' expectations and provided positive learning experiences.
Cultural Contribution	2	6.1	The workshop generated limited cultural and artistic gains.
Negative Evaluation	2	6.1	A small number of participants indicated that they did not benefit sufficiently from the workshop.

An examination of the findings presented in Table 1 indicates that the frequency and percentage distributions regarding teachers' expectations and perceived outcomes from the caricature workshop reveal that the workshop created a multidimensional environment promoting learning, development, and awareness. The category "Development, Learning, and Awareness" represented the highest proportion of responses, accounting for more than half of the participants ($f = 17$, 51.5%). This finding suggests that the caricature workshop was not limited to the acquisition of technical skills; rather, it also fostered teachers' cognitive development, strengthened their professional awareness, and made meaningful contributions to their intellectual growth. In other words, the workshop provided a holistic learning environment in which teachers enhanced their critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and self-evaluation skills through artistic production experiences. This finding is also consistent with the philosophy of the Türkiye Century Education Model (TCEM), which positions teachers as active agents of their own learning processes and emphasizes lifelong professional development.

An examination of the findings associated with the category "Satisfaction, Expectations, and Experience" revealed that 30.3% of the participants ($f = 10$) perceived the workshop as an experience that fully met their expectations and provided a highly positive learning experience. The flexible, pressure-free, and artistically stimulating learning environment enabled participants to distance themselves from feelings of professional exhaustion and experience renewed motivation. Conversely, the category "Cultural Contribution" ($f = 2$, 6.1%) indicates that the cultural and aesthetic dimensions of caricature as an artistic discipline were perceived only to a limited extent by the participants. This finding may be attributed to the greater emphasis placed on technical and practical activities during the initial stages of the program compared with the time allocated to its theoretical and cultural background. Finally, the proportion of participants classified under the theme "Negative Evaluation" remained relatively low at 6.1% ($f = 2$). The fact that only a small number of participants reported deriving insufficient academic and practical benefit from the workshop may be explained by factors such as limited personal interest, lower levels of prior readiness, or individual barriers related to drawing ability.

Findings Related to the Second Research Question

Table 2. Intellectual and Behavioral Transformation

Code	f	%	Interpretation
Experience, affective contribution, and perception of the process	10	38.5	The process was perceived as emotionally and experientially positive and motivating.

Development (cognitive, affective, and behavioral)	10	38.5	Multidimensional development was observed among the participants.
Continuity and professional reflection	3	11.5	Although limited, the process generated sustained interest and professional transfer.
Limitations and negative aspects	3	11.5	A small number of participants expressed concerns regarding insufficient time and limited impact.

An examination of the findings presented in Table 2 indicates that the cognitive, affective, and behavioral transformations experienced by teachers throughout the caricature workshop displayed a multidimensional and well-balanced structure. Thirty-eight point five percent of the participants ($f = 10$) expressed opinions under the code “Experience, affective contribution, and perception of the process,” stating that the workshop provided emotional relief, increased their motivation, and enhanced their aesthetic sensitivity. This finding suggests that the caricature workshop was not merely a training activity aimed at developing technical skills; rather, it also enabled teachers to gain positive affective experiences through artistic engagement and to develop favorable perceptions of the learning process. When interpreted within the framework of Mezirow's (2000) Transformative Learning Theory, this result demonstrates that teachers questioned their existing frames of reference and experienced the transformative potential of art for both personal development and professional learning.

Similarly, 38.5% of the participants ($f = 10$) expressed their views under the code “Development (cognitive, affective, and behavioral).” This finding indicates that caricature education not only supported teachers' affective development but also strengthened cognitive competencies such as critical thinking, developing creative perspectives, and interpreting events through the transformative power of humor. Furthermore, behavioral competencies, including transforming ideas into visual representations, employing creative expressive skills, and producing artistic works, also improved. Accordingly, the findings reveal that the caricature workshop provided a holistic learning experience that simultaneously fostered teachers' cognitive, affective, and behavioral development.

In contrast, the relatively lower proportion represented by the code “Continuity and professional reflection” is noteworthy. The transfer of these art-based gains into classroom pedagogical practices, instructional techniques, and the development of a lasting artistic hobby remained limited. Teachers' heavy curriculum demands and their limited experience in integrating caricature as an instructional tool may have contributed to this finding. Likewise, participants emphasizing the theme of “Limitations and negative aspects” stated that the primary obstacle to transformation was the limited duration of the workshop and the insufficiency of the available time to produce such a profound shift in mindset. Time constraints thus emerged as a structural barrier preventing participants from fully internalizing the techniques and developing enduring behavioral changes.

Findings Related to the Third Research Question

Table 3. Elements Attracting Attention and Interest

Code	f	%	Interpretation
Practice-based, experiential, and production-oriented learning	13	54.2	Participants' interest was primarily concentrated on learning by doing and caricature production processes.
Cultural, cognitive, and contextual awareness	10	41.7	The caricature production process established cultural, conceptual, and everyday-life connections.
Other elements	1	4.1	Secondary and scattered contributions remained limited.

The findings presented in Table 3 indicate that the aspect attracting teachers' attention most during the caricature workshop was practice-based learning. The code “Practice-based, experiential, and production-oriented learning” emerged as the category with the highest frequency (54.2%, $f = 13$). This finding demonstrates that teachers found practice-oriented learning activities requiring active participation to be more effective and engaging than theoretical knowledge transmission.

Participants identified the stages in which they directly engaged in drawing, transformed their own humorous ideas into visual representations, and produced original works as the most attractive components of the workshop. This result indicates that experiential learning supports teachers' active participation in the learning process and enhances learning permanence. Within the framework of Kolb's (2015) Experiential Learning Theory, teachers learned through concrete experiences, recognized the difficulties encountered during implementation, reflected upon these challenges, and developed solutions through repeated experimentation, thereby completing the experiential learning cycle effectively. In other words, teachers continuously evaluated their own performance throughout the production process, corrected their mistakes, and developed new strategies, significantly increasing their attention, motivation, and engagement in the learning process.

The second most prominent category was "Cultural, cognitive, and contextual awareness." Teachers recognized that caricature is not merely an art of drawing but also an intellectual mechanism of criticism encompassing social events, everyday paradoxes, and cultural codes. Establishing connections with social symbols during the drawing process enriched teachers' cognitive schemas. By contrast, the category "Other elements," which included issues such as classroom physical conditions, the quality of instructional materials, and the pace of instruction, remained at a very limited level, indicating that participants focused primarily on content, production, and intellectual dimensions rather than technical details.

Findings Related to the Fourth Research Question

Table 4. Satisfaction and Appreciation

Code	f	%	Interpretation
Practical caricature education (production and experience)	10	43.5	Participants were most satisfied with the practice and production processes.
Overall satisfaction	8	34.8	The process was evaluated positively as a whole.
Cultural and material experience	4	17.4	Cultural content and interaction with instructional materials were supportive.
Social dimension	1	4.3	Social interaction remained limited.

The findings presented in Table 4 indicate that teachers' appreciation of and satisfaction with the caricature workshop were largely shaped by practice-based learning experiences. The code "Practical caricature education (production and experience)" represented the category with the highest frequency (43.5%, $f = 10$). This finding demonstrates that teachers perceived practice-oriented activities as more effective and satisfying than conventional in-service training programs based primarily on theoretical knowledge transmission.

Participants regarded the opportunity to produce original works, express their creative ideas visually, and actively participate in the learning process as the primary sources of their satisfaction. This result suggests that production-oriented learning environments strengthen teachers' motivation and foster positive attitudes toward the learning process.

Meanwhile, 34.8% of the participants ($f = 8$) expressed opinions under the code "Overall satisfaction." This finding indicates that teachers were satisfied not only with the instructional activities themselves but also with the overall organization of the workshop, the learning environment, the instructor's guidance, and the educational process as a whole. Therefore, the caricature workshop may be considered to have provided a holistic learning experience encompassing content, process, and implementation.

In addition, the code "Cultural and material experience" accounted for 17.4% ($f = 4$) of participants' responses. Teachers stated that the opportunity to experiment with different drawing materials, together with the knowledge they acquired regarding the historical and cultural background of caricature, contributed positively to both their professional and personal development. This finding demonstrates that the workshop contributed not only to the

development of technical competencies but also to the enhancement of aesthetic sensitivity and cultural awareness.

Conversely, the code “Social dimension” had the lowest frequency (4.3%, $f = 1$). This finding may be attributed to the inherently individual nature of caricature production, which requires creativity and personal concentration. Since teachers primarily focused on individual artistic production, opportunities for peer interaction and collaborative learning remained limited.

Accordingly, it may be beneficial for future workshops to incorporate collaborative learning activities such as group projects, collective caricature production, and structured peer feedback in order to strengthen social learning processes.

Findings Related to the Fifth Research Question

Table 5. Limitations and Negative Aspects

Code	f	%	Interpretation
Overall satisfaction and positive feedback	13	52.0	The majority of participants evaluated the process positively.
Time and structural limitations	10	40.0	The primary concern was insufficient time.
Process and technical difficulties	2	8.0	Physical and skill-based difficulties were limited.

The findings presented in Table 5 indicate that teachers' perceptions regarding the limitations and negative aspects of the caricature workshop were generally framed within an overall positive evaluation of the program. The findings reveal that participants did not report any serious problems or systematic deficiencies concerning the implementation of the workshop.

The category with the highest frequency, “Overall satisfaction and positive feedback,” accounted for 52.0% ($f = 13$) of all responses. More than half of the participants responded to the question “*What difficulties did you encounter during the workshop process?*” by expressing their general satisfaction rather than identifying specific negative experiences. This finding suggests that the workshop's content, implementation process, and learning environment largely met teachers' expectations.

Nevertheless, the category “Time and structural limitations” emerged as the most significant area requiring improvement, representing 40.0% ($f = 10$) of participants' responses. Teachers emphasized that caricature, as an artistic discipline, requires considerable time for both technical practice and creative thinking, and that the duration of the workshop was insufficient for refining their drawings, receiving feedback, and further developing their artistic products. This finding suggests that time allocation has a decisive influence on the quality of learning in practice-based arts education and that extending workshop duration could enhance the effectiveness of similar programs.

On the other hand, the category “Process and technical difficulties” accounted for only 8.0% ($f = 2$) of participants' responses. This finding indicates that teachers generally did not experience substantial difficulties related to drawing techniques, artistic production processes, or implementation stages. The limited emphasis on technical problems suggests that the instructional guidance and step-by-step teaching strategies provided during the workshop facilitated the learning process.

In other words, the scaffolding provided by the instructor enabled teachers to manage technical challenges successfully and participate effectively in the workshop activities. Overall, the findings demonstrate that the caricature workshop offered a highly effective learning experience, with the primary area requiring improvement being the extension of the implementation period.

Findings Related to the Ceramics Workshop

Findings Related to the First Research Question

Table 6. The Effect of the Workshop Process on Meeting Expectations and Promoting Development

Code	f	%	Interpretation
Positive Fulfilment of Expectations and Development	25	78.1	The vast majority of participants evaluated the ceramics workshop as a multidimensional learning experience that both met their expectations and contributed to their development.
Partial / Negative Fulfilment	4	12.5	A limited number of participants reported that their expectations were not fully met or that they experienced little or no change.
Challenge and Awareness	3	9.4	Challenging aspects of the process emerged as elements that fostered awareness and supported learning.

An examination of the findings presented in Table 6 indicates that the expectations of teachers participating in the ceramics workshop were largely fulfilled and that the workshop process made significant contributions to their professional and personal development. The category "Positive Fulfilment of Expectations and Development" had the highest frequency (78.1%, $f = 25$). This finding demonstrates that the ceramics workshop largely met participants' expectations while making positive contributions to both their personal and professional development. Participants stated that they acquired new skills through ceramics activities, actively participated in creative production processes, and enriched their professional perspectives through artistic experiences.

Direct interaction with a malleable material such as clay during the ceramics activities contributed not only to the improvement of teachers' manual skills but also to the enhancement of their aesthetic perception, three-dimensional thinking abilities, and opportunities for creative expression. Furthermore, the workshop provided a production-oriented and relaxing learning environment that enabled teachers to distance themselves from the demands of their daily professional lives, thereby fostering positive affective experiences.

In contrast, the category "Partial / Negative Fulfilment" accounted for 12.5% ($f = 4$) of the responses. The views included in this category reflected certain challenges arising from the unique technical characteristics of ceramic production. In particular, processes such as drying, firing, and the possibility of product damage occasionally prevented participants' expectations from being fully met. Moreover, some teachers' high expectations regarding their own artistic performance may also have influenced the way they evaluated their final products.

The category "Challenge and Awareness" represented 9.4% ($f = 3$) of the responses. This finding indicates that teachers did not perceive the technical difficulties encountered during the workshop merely as problems; rather, they regarded them as natural components of the learning process. Participants reported that the challenges experienced during ceramic shaping enhanced their patience, attention, problem-solving abilities, and self-evaluation skills. This finding demonstrates that experience-based arts education supports not only individuals' technical competencies but also their self-awareness and positive attitudes toward learning.

Findings Related to the Second Research Question

Table 7. Multidimensional Personal Transformation (Affective, Cognitive, and Behavioral)

Code	f	%	Interpretation
Affective, Cognitive, and Psychomotor Gains	14	51.85	Participants reported developing relaxation, enjoyment, increased self-confidence, patience, concentration, and related outcomes by the end of the workshop.
Motivation and Willingness to Continue	9	33.33	For some participants, the workshop has the potential to evolve into a sustainable hobby.

Limited Impact	3	11.11	A small number of participants stated that they experienced no significant change or found the process relatively easy.
Professional Contribution	1	3.71	Although limited, some transfer of workshop experiences into classroom practices was reported.

The findings presented in Table 7 indicate that the ceramics workshop generated a multidimensional developmental process encompassing teachers' cognitive, affective, and psychomotor domains. The category "Affective, Cognitive, and Psychomotor Gains" had the highest frequency (51.85%, $f = 14$), representing more than half of all participant responses. This finding demonstrates that the ceramics workshop not only enhanced teachers' technical competencies but also supported their emotional well-being, enriched their cognitive processes, and strengthened their psychomotor skills.

Participants stated that the workshop provided relaxation and enjoyment, enabled them to sustain attention for longer periods, and improved personal qualities such as patience and self-confidence. Furthermore, direct engagement with clay offered a learning experience that fostered creativity, enhanced aesthetic sensitivity, and allowed teachers to distance themselves from the pressures of their everyday professional responsibilities.

Another prominent category emerging from participants' responses was "Motivation and Willingness to Continue," accounting for 33.33% ($f = 9$) of the responses. This finding suggests that the ceramics workshop generated not only immediate satisfaction but also increased participants' interest in artistic activities, thereby supporting lifelong learning tendencies. Participants expressed their willingness to continue practicing ceramics and to participate in similar artistic activities after the completion of the workshop. This finding indicates that art-based professional development practices may contribute to teachers' continuous learning and personal development.

Conversely, the category "Limited Impact" accounted for 11.11% ($f = 3$) of the responses. Teachers in this category stated that the workshop did not produce a substantial change in themselves or that the activities made only limited contributions relative to their existing knowledge and skill levels. This outcome may be attributed to participants' previous experience with similar artistic or craft-based activities.

The category with the lowest frequency was "Professional Contribution" (3.71%, $f = 1$). This finding indicates that teachers perceived the transferability of the competencies acquired through the ceramics workshop to classroom practices and school settings as relatively limited.

The lack of physical infrastructure, instructional materials, and workshop facilities required for ceramics activities in many schools appears to be one of the primary barriers limiting the integration of these competencies into instructional processes. Nevertheless, it should also be recognized that the aspects of ceramics education that foster creativity, problem-solving, patience, and aesthetic sensitivity may be transferred into educational settings through various instructional activities.

Findings Related to the Third Research Question

Table 8. Experiential Learning and Areas of Interest

Code	f	%	Interpretation
Practice and Production Process	10	45.5	Participants were most interested in direct practice and production experiences.
Creativity and Connections with Everyday Life	5	22.7	The relationship between ceramics and everyday life, together with its creative production dimension, attracted considerable attention.
Cognitive Learning and Knowledge Updating	3	13.6	Participants had opportunities to review their existing knowledge and acquire new information.

Cultural Enrichment and Museum Experience	2	9.1	Historical and cultural contexts supported the learning process.
Other	2	9.1	A small number of participants emphasized general motivation or expressed no specific opinion.

The findings presented in Table 8 indicate that the aspect attracting the greatest interest among teachers during the ceramics workshop was practice-based production activities. The category "Practice and Production Process" emerged as the most frequently mentioned theme (45.5%, $f = 10$). This finding demonstrates that teachers' active participation in kneading clay, shaping forms, and producing original works made their learning experiences more engaging and meaningful. Participants emphasized that direct interaction with the material not only improved their practical skills but also increased their attention and motivation throughout the learning process.

The second most prominent category, "Creativity and Connections with Everyday Life," accounted for 22.7% ($f = 5$) of the responses. Teachers considered the practical usability of the ceramic products they created, together with the opportunity to express their creativity freely, as important sources of motivation. The production of functional objects enabled participants to evaluate the learning process through tangible outcomes, thereby increasing their engagement in artistic production.

The category "Cognitive Learning and Knowledge Updating" represented 13.6% ($f = 3$) of participant responses. This finding indicates that teachers were interested not only in practical applications but also in the theoretical dimensions of ceramic art. Participants stated that information regarding ceramic materials, types of clay, firing techniques, and production processes enriched their learning experiences. This result demonstrates that practice-based arts education provides an integrated learning environment in which theoretical knowledge and practical experience complement one another.

The category "Cultural Enrichment and Museum Experience" accounted for 9.1% ($f = 2$) of the responses. Teachers indicated that activities such as learning about the historical development of ceramics, exploring its relationship with cultural heritage, and participating in museum visits enriched their artistic experiences. This finding demonstrates that the ceramics workshop functioned not only as a skill-development activity but also as an interdisciplinary learning experience that promoted cultural awareness and knowledge of art history.

Finally, the category "Other" represented 9.1% ($f = 2$) of participant responses. These responses reflected general interest, curiosity, and motivation toward the workshop. Overall, the findings indicate that teachers' interest in the ceramics workshop was largely shaped by a multidimensional learning process integrating practice-based learning, creative production, theoretical knowledge acquisition, and cultural experiences.

DISCUSSION

The findings obtained from the caricature and ceramics workshops conducted within the City and Culture Academy of the Mersin Teacher Academies clearly demonstrate the extent to which art-based practices function as powerful transformative instruments in teachers' professional and personal development. When the findings are examined from a holistic perspective, it becomes evident that teachers in both workshops predominantly emphasized the themes of development, learning, awareness, and positive fulfilment of expectations. These findings are highly consistent with contemporary national and international studies highlighting the restorative role of art in adult education, its contribution to the development of cognitive schemas, and its effectiveness in reducing professional burnout (Blandy, 2021; Eisner, 2002; Sullivan, 2022). Teachers' reconstruction of their own learning ecosystems through artistic practice directly supports the fundamental principles of the Türkiye Century Education Model (TCEM), particularly its emphasis on holistic education and aesthetic and affective development.

The first theoretical foundation of this study, Kolb's (2015) Experiential Learning Theory, was empirically confirmed by participants' strong engagement with practice-oriented and production-based learning processes in both the caricature and ceramics workshops. Rather than remaining passive recipients of information in

traditional in-service professional development programs, teachers achieved the highest levels of satisfaction during the Concrete Experience and Active Experimentation phases, where they physically manipulated clay and created drawings using ink. Consistent with these findings, previous studies by Kolb (2015) and Møller-Skau and Lindstøl (2022) have demonstrated that experiential and production-oriented approaches in teacher education significantly enhance pedagogical retention and intrinsic motivation compared with conventional lecture-based instruction. Furthermore, participants' perception of challenges encountered during the ceramics workshop as opportunities for awareness provides clear evidence that Kolb's stages of Reflective Observation and Abstract Conceptualization naturally operated throughout the learning process.

From the perspective of Mezirow's (2000) Transformative Learning Theory, the findings regarding cognitive, affective, and behavioral transformation in the caricature workshop and the multidimensional personal gains observed in the ceramics workshop are particularly noteworthy. Teachers reported not merely acquiring new artistic techniques but also experiencing profound transformations in higher-order affective and cognitive domains, including increased patience, sustained concentration, enhanced self-confidence, and improved management of professional stress. These findings correspond directly to Mezirow's concept of transformation of frames of reference. Art functioned as a disorienting dilemma, prompting teachers to reconsider their everyday and professional routines by encouraging humorous and critical reflection through caricature or by requiring patient control and manipulation of a plastic material through ceramics. Similar findings have been consistently reported in studies of holistic adult education conducted by Cranton (2016) and Dirkx (2001), which emphasize the transformative role of art in fostering emotional and spiritual integration.

However, one of the most significant and actionable findings of this study concerns the limited transfer of artistic learning outcomes into classroom pedagogy. While professional transfer remained relatively limited in the caricature workshop, it was even more restricted in the ceramics workshop. This finding indicates that although teachers successfully internalized art-based learning in terms of personal growth and psychological well-being, they encountered substantial barriers when attempting to integrate these experiences into existing curricula and instructional practices.

International studies by Møller-Skau and Lindstøl (2022) and Sheridan et al. (2022) similarly identify transferability to school contexts and curricula as the weakest aspect of art-based teacher education. Within the Turkish educational context, this limitation may be explained by inadequate physical infrastructure, the absence of ceramic studios and equipment in schools, the pressure of examination-oriented curricula, and the lack of methodological guidance regarding the pedagogical integration of caricature into classroom instruction.

Another common systemic limitation identified across both workshops was insufficient instructional time. Artistic production inherently requires slow, reflective, and deeply focused engagement. Although participants expressed high levels of satisfaction, they consistently reported that the duration of the workshops was inadequate.

This finding suggests that innovative professional development models of this nature should be implemented over extended periods—preferably throughout an academic year—rather than being delivered as short-term interventions. Consistent with this interpretation, Darling-Hammond et al. (2017) emphasize that one-shot or compressed professional development programs rarely produce lasting behavioral change and recommend sustained, long-term models of professional learning.

Overall, the Mersin Teacher Academies City and Culture Academy provides compelling evidence that integrating two complementary artistic disciplines—caricature and ceramics—within teacher education constitutes a highly effective model for enriching teachers' affective and cognitive capacities.

The intellectual critique and humor inherent in caricature, together with the therapeutic and tactile nature of ceramics, complemented one another to facilitate multidimensional professional transformation. Nevertheless, for these transformations to extend into classroom practice and ultimately benefit students, structural issues related to instructional time must be addressed, and practical pedagogical guidance focusing on curriculum integration should be incorporated into future implementations.

CONCLUSION

This study comprehensively examined the effects of the art-based teacher education practices implemented within the City and Culture Academy of the Mersin Teacher Academies—specifically the caricature and ceramics workshops—on teachers' multidimensional developmental processes.

Based on the qualitative and quantitative empirical findings, art-based professional development practices successfully met the expectations of the vast majority of participants and created a holistic developmental environment encompassing cognitive, affective, and awareness dimensions. These findings demonstrate strong macro-pedagogical alignment with the teacher vision promoted by the Türkiye Century Education Model.

Rather than conventional in-service training programs in which teachers remain passive recipients of information, participants identified learning experiences involving direct participation, hands-on engagement, and the production of tangible artistic products—whether caricatures or ceramic works—as the most engaging and effective instructional stages. Throughout these processes, Kolb's experiential learning cycle operated effectively.

The findings, particularly those emerging from the ceramics workshop, demonstrate that direct interaction with clay produced significant therapeutic outcomes, including psychological relief, relaxation, increased patience, sustained concentration, and enhanced self-confidence. These findings provide strong evidence that the workshops offered a transformative adult learning experience consistent with Mezirow's theoretical framework.

Despite the substantial personal and artistic gains achieved, the transfer of these competencies into classroom instruction, interdisciplinary lesson design, and broader school practices remained relatively limited. Teachers reported that inadequate physical facilities and curriculum-related constraints constituted the primary barriers to pedagogical transfer.

Finally, insufficient instructional time emerged as the most significant limitation across both artistic disciplines. The inherently reflective and production-oriented nature of artistic learning requires longer instructional periods than those provided within compressed workshop schedules.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings and conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the quality and sustainability of art-based teacher education programs:

1. Workshop programs should be designed across an entire academic year rather than being implemented as compressed short-term activities, with longer weekly instructional sessions.
2. Pedagogical transfer modules—such as "Using Caricature as an Instructional Material" or "Interdisciplinary Applications of Ceramics"—should be incorporated into the final stage of teacher education programs.
3. Basic ceramics infrastructure, including clay, kilns, and workshop facilities, should be established in schools to enable teachers to transfer their artistic competencies into educational practice.
4. Hybrid or sequential programs integrating both two-dimensional (caricature) and three-dimensional (ceramics) artistic disciplines should be developed to maximize complementary learning outcomes.
5. Greater emphasis should be placed on the historical, mythological, and cultural foundations of artistic disciplines during the initial workshop sessions to strengthen teachers' intellectual awareness.
6. Collaborative learning activities—such as collective mural projects or collaborative ceramic installations—should be incorporated alongside individual artistic production to strengthen peer interaction and social learning.

7. In addition to traditional drawing techniques, digital illustration technologies, including graphic tablets and software such as Procreate and Adobe Photoshop, should be integrated into caricature workshops to enhance teachers' digital literacy and competencies aligned with the Türkiye Century Education Model.
8. Teachers' artistic products should be exhibited on both national and international platforms at the conclusion of each program to reinforce professional identity, artistic self-confidence, and motivation.
9. Longitudinal mixed-methods studies should be conducted to investigate the long-term effects of art-based teacher education on classroom teaching practices, classroom management strategies, and teacher burnout.
10. School administrators should participate in similar awareness-oriented arts education programs to create institutional environments that support teachers' implementation of artistic practices within schools.
11. Sustainable digital networks and alumni coordination mechanisms should be established to enable Teacher Academy graduates to continue sharing instructional materials, professional experiences, and artistic practices while also contributing to the international literature on teacher education.

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